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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 001000

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STATE FOR AF/W
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/05/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: EBONYI STATE GOVERNOR SAYS PRESIDENCY WILL GO NORTH

REF: LAGOS 935

Classified By: Consul General Brian L. Browne for Reason 1.4 (D).

¶1. (C) Summary: During a June 25 meeting, Ebonyi State Governor Sam Egwu told the Consul General that the Presidency should go to a Northerner, with the Vice Presidency to an Igbo Southeasterner. Egwu sensed that, through a process of elimination of the more vocal and also more contentious Igbo candidates, he could emerge as the People's Democratic Party (PDP) Vice Presidential candidate in 2007. For now, his task was to tarry patiently in hopes the more aggressive candidates cannibalize each other. End summary.

EGWU SEEKING VP CANDIDACY; BELIEVES
PRESIDENCY WILL GO NORTH

¶2. (C) In a June 25 discussion with the Consul General, a relaxed Ebonyi State Governor Sam Egwu gauged that he had a good change of winning the PDP Vice Presidential nomination in 2007. Professing not to be obsessed with higher office, Egwu stated he would not actively campaign for the slot. Instead, he would initially watch the unfolding drama, expecting the crop of candidates to attenuate as time progresses. Once the field became less crowded, he would then decide whether to plant the seeds of his candidacy. As to the agitation from many Southeastern Nigerians for an Igbo president, Egwu called that objection a pipe dream. For stability's sake, he felt the Presidency should return North in 2007. Moreover, the rest of Nigeria was not yet ready for an Igbo Chief Magistrate nor was the South-South sufficiently united to produce a consensus regional candidate, opined Egwu.

¶3. (C) Consequently, Egwu predicted the Presidency will go to the North, the Vice Presidency will go to an Igbo candidate from the Southeast, and the South-South would be offered a greater slice of the pie of oil derivation revenues.

EGWU IS POPULAR AMONG SOUTHEAST GOVERNORS

¶4. (C) Assessing the possible Vice Presidential chances of his fellow Southeastern governors, Egwu cited Enugu State Governor Chimaroke Nnamani as the only governor in the zone with a solid record of achievement. However, he called Nnamani an autocrat who brooks no dissent. Thus, he has made unnecessary political enemies. Additionally, Nnamani was on thin ice with President Obasanjo due to Nnamani having been a little too boisterous in voicing his own ambition to people who relayed these Nnamani indiscretions to the President. Egwu stated that Kalu of Abia State and Udenwa of Imo State were out of consideration within the PDP because of the

former's anti-Obasanjo paroxysms and the latter's more temperate yet noticeable pro-Atiku inclinations.

RECONCILIATION EFFORTS IN EBONYI FAIL

¶5. (C) Anambra State Special Adviser to the Governor Onyiba Ajanwachukwu said reconciliation efforts to mend divisions within the state PDP chapter failed in Ebonyi because the members of the reconciliation committee sent from Abuja were themselves partisan, aiming to lift one faction in the State over the other. In particular, reconciliation committee members seemed enthralled by former Minister of Culture Frank Ogbuewu who was being touted by Anambra State strongmen and Presidential insider, Chris Uba, as Ebonyi's next Governor in ¶2007. Ajanwachukwu, however, claimed that despite the backing from Uba and possibly Abuja, Ogbuewu was not very popular and does not have the local support to dictate to Egwu's faction who should be the State's next governor.

COMMENT

¶6. (C) With the demise of the third term, the political firmament has been tossed into disarray. New constellations will emerge. While Egwu knows his star may not be the brightest, he sees it as steady and one that will be well positioned once things begin to settle down. If the PDP Vice Presidency is earmarked for the Southeast and if Obasanjo has a major role in selecting that ticket, Egwu has a good shot at the nomination. However, he will have to perform a balancing act. He wants to maintain control of his state,

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but Anambra strongman Chris Uba is flexing his muscle and wants to encroach into Egwu's backyard. Through his brother Andy, Chris has influence with the President. Should Egwu not be able to finesse his dealings with Uba in Ebonyi, Uba could become what Egwu has thus far avoided - the major political opponent whose connection to the President could poison the mention of Egwu's name in the President's ear.

End comment

BROWNE